Workshop Abstract

Despite the process of negotiating the EPAs between the ACP and EU countries appearing to have been conceived with sustainable development goals in mind, progress in the negotiations has yet to reflect this ambition. With only a few months remaining in the scheduled EPA negotiations, this situation is generating significant concern among various stakeholders including politicians, civil society representatives and academics in the ACP and Europe who have repeatedly urged that the EPAs not renege on their promise for sustainable development. It has also heightened awareness about the need to develop monitoring mechanisms to measure the progress of implementing the agreements in the context of sustainable development.

As a contribution to the ongoing discussions on sustainable development among the various stakeholders from the SADC region, the Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa (TRALAC) and the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) are organizing a SADC EPA Benchmarking Workshop that will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa on 1 October 2007.

In brief, the purpose of the workshop is to:

1. Provide an opportunity to review the most recent analysis on the issue prepared by Professor Colin McCarthy, Mr. Paul Kruger and Mr. Johan Fourie entitled *'Benchmarking EPA Negotiations between EU and SADC'* and gather feedback from stakeholders from the SADC region.
2. Bridge the information gaps among the countries in the SADC and COMESA regions with the respect to the EPA negotiations and gather regional thinking on key issues relevant to ensuring the agreements include and effectively monitor sustainable development objectives; and
3. Enable stakeholders in Southern and Eastern Africa to better define and articulate their own sustainable development objectives for their respective EPA negotiations and implementation process.

The issues to be discussed will include: (a) a presentation of the study on benchmarking EPA negotiations between SADC and the EU; (b) observations on the study by representatives of the SADC Secretariat, and the countries of BNLS[1], MAT[2] and South Africa; (c) introduction to a Development-Motivated Monitoring Process of the EPAs' Implementation relevant to all EPA negotiating groups presented by Dr. Werner Corrales-Leal, ICTSD Senior Fellow; and (d) key conclusions and the way forward.

The workshop will bring together a group of 20-25 key stakeholders including international experts, policy-makers from the SADC and COMESA regions, and representatives of the business community, academia and civil society. The workshop will be conducted in an open, informal manner.

Please also take note that a COMESA side-meeting will be held the next morning on 2 October 2007 and all participants are invited to participate in this meeting as well. More details to follow soon.

[1] BLNS countries consist of the developing countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland.
[2] MAT countries consist of the LDCs of Mozambique, Angola and Tanzania.

SADC EPA Benchmarking
1 October, 2007
Johannesburg, South Africa

PROGRAMME
Monday, October 1, 2007

08:30 – 09:00	**Registration**
09:00 – 09:20	**Opening** and Welcome remarks – *Werner Corales, ICTSD*
09:20 – 10:00	**Session 1:** *Colin McCarthy, tralac associate* • SADC EPA Benchmark presentation
10.00 – 10:30	*Tea break*
10:30 – 11:00	**Session 2:** • Observations by SADC Secretariat representative
11:00 – 11:30	**Session 3:** • Observations by BLNS representative (2 participants, 1 from BN being developing countries and 1 from LS being LDC's)
11:30 – 12:00	**Session 4:** • Observations by RSA representative (TDCA perspective)
12:00 – 12:30	**Session 5:** • Observations by MAT representative
12:30 – 14:00	*Lunch*
14:00 – 16:30	**Session 6:** • Open discussion with questions to the presenters
19.00	*DINNER*